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# WICCA



A GUIDE FOR  
THE  
SOLITARY  
PRACTITIONER

# SCOTT CUNNINGHAM

INCLUDES AUTHOR'S BOOK OF SHADOWS

## About the Author

Scott Cunningham practiced elemental magic for over twenty years. He authored more than thirty books, both fiction and nonfiction. Scott's books reflect a broad range of interests from the New Age sphere, where he was highly regarded. He passed from this life on March 28, 1993, after a long illness.

# WICCA

A GUIDE FOR THE  
SOLITARY PRACTITIONER

SCOTT  
CUNNINGHAM



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This book is dedicated to the forces that watch over and guide us—  
however we may envision or name them.

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# Preface

THIS BOOK, THE result of sixteen years of practical experience and research, is a guidebook outlining basic Wiccan theory and practice. It is written with the solitary student or practitioner in mind; there are no coven rituals or magical group dynamics described herein.

The Wicca as described here is “new.” It is not a revelation of ancient rituals handed down for thousands of years. This does not invalidate it, however, for it is based on time-honored practices.

A three-thousand-year-old incantation to manna isn’t necessarily more powerful or effective than one improvised during a private rite. The person practicing the ritual or spell determines its success.

If centuries-old incantations are nothing more to you than senseless gibberish, chances are the ritual won’t work, any more than would a Shinto ceremony in the hands of a Methodist. To be effective, rituals must speak to you.

Rituals are at the heart of Wicca for some, and are pleasant adjuncts to Wicca’s philosophy and way of life for others. In Wicca, as with every religion, ritual is a means of contacting the divine. Effective ritual unites the worshipper with deity. Ineffective ritual kills spirituality.

There are rituals in this book, yes, but they’re guideposts, not holy writ. I wrote them so that others, using them as general guidelines, could create their own.

Some people might say, “But that’s just your stuff. We want the *real* Wicca! *Tell us the secrets!*”

There is not, and can never be, one “pure” or “true” or “genuine” form of Wicca. There are no central governing agencies, no physical

leaders, no universally recognized prophets or messengers. Although specific, structured forms of Wicca certainly exist, they aren't in agreement regarding ritual, symbolism, and theology. Because of this healthy individualism, no one ritual or philosophical system has emerged to consume the others.

Wicca is varied and multi-faceted. As in every religion, the Wiccan spiritual experience is one shared with deity alone. This book is simply one way, based on my experiences and the instruction I have received, to practice Wicca.

Although I wrote it, it didn't hatch out of thin air. The jeweler who facets rough emeralds didn't create the gemstones; nor the potter the clay. I've tried to present a blending of the major themes and ritual structures of Wicca, not to create a new form, but to present one so that others can develop their own Wiccan practices.

When I began learning Wicca there were few books, certainly no published Books of Shadows.\* Wiccan rituals and magical texts are secret within many traditions of Wicca, and it wasn't until recently that any systems have "gone public." Due to this fact, few Wiccans wrote books describing the rituals and inner teachings of Wicca. Those outside the Wicca (or the Craft as it is also known) who wrote of it could necessarily report only garbled or incomplete pictures.

Within a few years of my introduction to Wicca, however, many authentic, informative books began to be published. As I continued my studies, both independently and under teachers I had met, I realized that anyone trying to learn and practice Wicca solely from published sources would gain a sadly unbalanced picture.

Most Wiccan authors tout their own form of Wicca. This makes sense: write what you know. Unfortunately, many of the foremost Wiccan authors share similar views, and so most of the published Wiccan material is repetitive.

Also, most of these books are geared toward coven-(group) oriented Wicca. This poses a problem for anyone unable to find a minimum of

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\* See glossary for unfamiliar terms.

four or five interested, compatible persons to create a coven. It also lays a burden on those who desire private religious practice.

Perhaps my true reason for writing this book—besides numerous requests—is strictly personal. I not only wish to present an alternate to staid, structured Wiccan books, I also want to return something for the training I have received in this contemporary religion.

Although I occasionally teach, and Wicca always draws a crowd, I prefer the medium of printed words to point out some of the things I have learned. Although nothing can replace one-on-one teaching, this isn't practical for all those desiring to learn.

And so, several years ago, I began jotting down notes and chapters that eventually became this book. To avoid becoming too narrow-minded (Sybil Leek once said that it was dangerous writing about your own religion—you're too close to it), I've had Wiccan friends read and comment on early drafts to ensure that the picture of Wicca presented here isn't too limited or dogmatic.

Please don't misunderstand me. Though this book's goal is a wider understanding of, and appreciation of Wicca, I'm not proselytizing. Like most Wiccans, I'm not out to change your spiritual and religious beliefs; it's none of my business.

However, with the continuing interest in nontraditional religions, concern over environmental destruction, and a wide interest in the Wiccan religion, I hope this book partially answers one of the questions I'm most commonly asked: "What is Wicca?"